

## THE SWEDES, GOVERNOR PRINTZ AND THE BEGINNING OF PENNSYLVANIA.

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Of the original thirteen States, those south of the Middle States as well as those known under the collective name of New England, were settled by men and women of English race. New York, New Jersey and Delaware were first settled by Hollanders. The whole area of the Dutch settlements was known as New Netherland, and the chief city of the Hollanders in the new world was called Amsterdam in New Netherland, though historians afterwards thought fit to change the name into *New Amsterdam*,<sup>1</sup> doubtless because the English had renamed the town *New York*. The settlements in the valley of the Hudson and in what is now New Jersey passed by conquest into the hands of the English. The Dutch settlement in Delaware was destroyed after six months by the Indians. Subsequently, the Swedes took over the inchoate title of the Dutch to present-day Delaware. The Swedes later lost Delaware to the Dutch by conquest, who in their turn were afterwards conquered by the English.

No European Power, however, occupied and took possession of what today constitutes the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, until Lieutenant-Colonel John Printz, who was the fourth Governor of New Sweden, moved up from Delaware to Great Tinicum Island and there established, in 1643, his seat of government, the first capital placed in the territory of the present State of Pennsylvania. He thereby became the first governor of the territory now known as Pennsylvania.

That Sweden was the first European nation to possess itself of what is present-day Pennsylvania was supported by the International

<sup>1</sup> I have to thank Mr. Robert H. Kelby, the learned librarian of the New York Historical Society, for this information.

Law of the seventeenth century. Towards the end of the sixteenth century there grew up as a rule of international law that, in order that a member of the family of nations could claim as its own a newly discovered and virgin land, it was necessary for that nation to actually occupy and possess that virgin land. The act of merely discovering and christening such an unoccupied land did not give the right of possession. The act of possession must be an actual occupancy through the establishment of forts and settlements in that land. Queen Elizabeth enunciated this principle clearly in 1580 in a notable answer she made at her court to the Spanish Ambassador, Mendoza.<sup>2</sup> It was thus recognized by England through the lips of her sovereign, a sovereign who well knew how to maintain the dignity and interests of her realm abroad. That rule became more and more recognized both by the publicists in their writings and by the nations in their acts, and has remained a rule of international law until the present day.

The sovereignty of Sweden over the land now known as Pennsylvania passed later by conquest to the States General of the United Netherlands, and subsequently again by conquest to the British crown, by whom it was afterwards granted to William Penn.

The fact that the sovereignty of Pennsylvania, alone of the original thirteen, goes back to Sweden for its beginning and that Printz was the first in the line of its governors, is known to only a very few. It would seem well then, that proper monuments to Printz and his Swedish settlement should be erected, so that future generations may know of the beginning of this province and state. And no place would seem more appropriate than the ancient hall of this venerable society of learning, the oldest existing society of learning not only within the bounds of Pennsylvania but also in all of the new world as well, to suggest that, first a bronze tablet should be erected in memory of Governor Printz and his capital called Nya Göteborg on Great Tinicum Island; and second, a bronze statue of Governor Printz, either of life or heroic size, should be placed at some conspicuous place in the city of Philadelphia.

<sup>2</sup> Camden's "Annals," 1580; see translation in Sir Travers Twiss's "Oregon Question."